

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 30, 2011

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United State House of Representatives
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Norman Dicks
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Denny Rehberg
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Rehberg and Ranking Members Dicks and DeLauro:

As you work on the Fiscal Year 2012 Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request the inclusion of \$100 million of previously authorized funding to support and expand consumer assistance programs.

The requested funds will be used to provide one-on-one assistance to educate individuals about their health care options, facilitate enrollment, help maintain coverage, and troubleshoot problems that may arise. Through interactions with consumers, staff in these programs can also capture valuable information about implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which can help identify problems early so they can be addressed.

As you know, this consumer assistance program was authorized in the Affordable Care Act, which was enacted into law last Congress. In October, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released \$30 million to fund consumer assistance programs in states across the country to develop a reliable and trusted source of information to help them navigate the reformed health care system. HHS awarded consumer assistance program grant funds to 35 states, the District of Columbia, and four territories. States are using the consumer assistance grants to enhance existing programs and build new capacity to help health care consumers find answers to their health care questions.

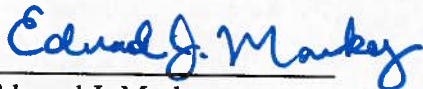
The significance of the federal investment in this program to support individuals and their families is immeasurable. As many important health insurance changes and consumer protections are already being implemented, consumers need information about their options in choosing health insurance and accessing their health benefits.

The new federal financial support is being used by states to help build strong consumer assistance programs to help individuals and families navigate the changes in the health care

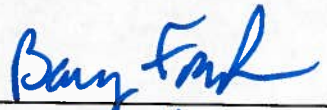
system. However, additional resources are necessary to support infrastructure development to ensure that individuals and families in every state have the same opportunities.

We are aware of the budgetary challenges confronting the Subcommittee as you work to craft a health care, education, and workforce funding bill to meet the needs of the American people, and we greatly appreciate your consideration of consumer assistance programs which are critical to successful implementation of the new health reform law.

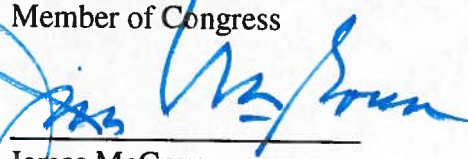
Sincerely,



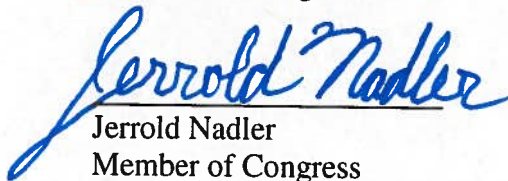
Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress



Barney Frank
Member of Congress



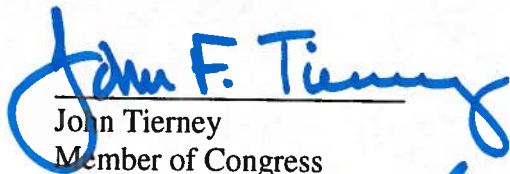
James McGovern
Member of Congress



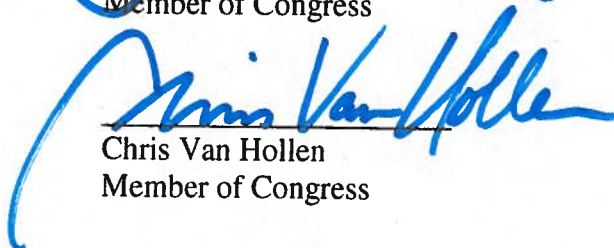
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



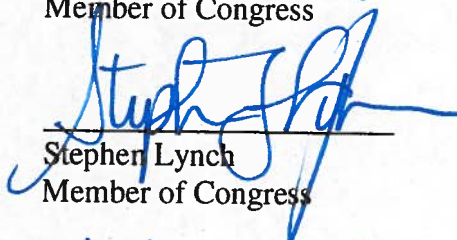
John Tierney
Member of Congress



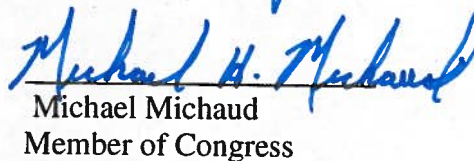
Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



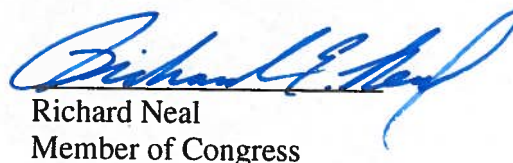
Michael Capuano
Member of Congress



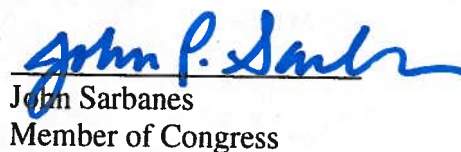
Stephen Lynch
Member of Congress



Michael Michaud
Member of Congress



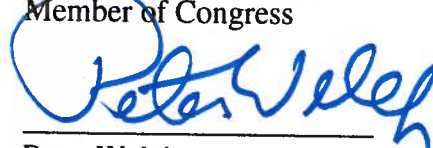
Richard Neal
Member of Congress



John Sarbanes
Member of Congress



Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress